

A DEVIL FISH.

Capture of One of these Monsters at La Paz, Mexico.

[From the San Francisco Chronicle.]

Under date of December 9th an officer of the United States war steamer Pensacola writes from La Paz, Mexico, as follows: The most exciting event of our cruise thus far was the capture to-day of an immense devil fish. Ever since our arrival in these waters several huge fish have been observed in the vicinity of the ship, and much speculation has arisen as to what they were. One making its appearance this afternoon, our gunner, George F. Cushman, decided to establish his identity if possible; and, accompanied by Assistant Engineer Edwards, Midshipmen McDonald, Wood and Craven, and Paymaster's Clerk Spaulding, gave chase in the dingey. The fish, swimming slowly and near the surface of the water, which is very clear here, looked like a great rhapsodical brown mass, frequently throwing above the waves the thin, white tips of its sides like the dorsal fin of a shark. It allowed the boat to approach within a few yards of it without showing symptoms of alarm, when it suddenly sounded. The harpoon thrown by Mr. Cushman struck, but not with sufficient force to hold, for the fish freed itself and disappeared, after dragging the boat with great velocity for several seconds. Another was seen, however, after a short search, and was approached more successfully. As it showed an indifference to our presence equally great to that of its companion, we pulled the boat directly over and no more than a foot or two above it, and Mr. Cushman, standing in the bow, plunged the harpoon firmly into its flesh. In an instant that seemingly passive mass was transformed into an infuriated monster, which first threw itself bodily out of the water and then, settling down to business, sent the harpoon-line whizzing out at a rate that would have made it decidedly uncomfortable for us had the line become foul. The strain soon came upon the dingey and we were whisked along with the speed of an express train; we felt as though we had applied the match to some mine, or that we had been taken in tow by the gentleman in black himself. It was a ride that, for novelty and speed, could rarely be equaled. Imagine our situation, in a light boat, with such a monster attached to it, which, as it rushed along, now on the surface, and again diving deep, threatening to upset us among the sharks, and you can realize the intense excitement of the moment. The only available thing in the boat, a bucket, had been made fast to the harpoon line to offer some additional resistance, but the fish seemed to regard it no more than a feather, and with the bucket out of sight under the water, continued to draw us up and down the bay at full speed. During all this time its efforts had been confined to an attempt to escape, but as its load grew heavy it became belligerent and several times turned upon the boat, exhibiting the full capacity of a mouth some two feet in diameter, and lashing the boat with its sides. We made up our minds that if the fish decided to jump into the dingey we would quietly slip out over one side as he appeared at the other. But a vigorous resistance from boat-hooks and oars induced him to resume his fight in each instance. By this time all hands on the ship were watching the struggle, and the whale-boat was sent to our assistance, but for fully an hour both boats, lashed together, were towed with no signs of exhaustion from the fish, the thrusts of boarding pikes seeming only to accelerate its speed. Finally its immense exertions told upon it, and it came to the surface directly between the two boats, where it was placed *hors de combat* by blows from an axe, and, dyeing the water crimson with blood, was towed ashore and dragged upon the beach. It required the united exertions of nearly forty men to accomplish this undertaking. A more formidable looking monster than this devil fish could hardly be imagined. It was shaped somewhat like an immense bat, measuring 15½ feet in width by 11 feet in length; it was 29 inches thick and weighed probably 2,000 pounds. It had but one fin, unless the wing-shaped extremities by which it propelled itself can be considered such, or that at the base of a long, thin tail, similar in appearance to a riding-whip, and which is preserved as a memento of the adventure. Its eyes are placed in flexible projections which seem to have been used to grasp and convey food to its mouth. The mouth, large enough to engulf a man whole, was destitute of teeth, but furnished

with solid bones, that in the dying agonies of the fish ground large pieces of coral as a stone-crusher would stone. The skin of the flesh was rough as a coarse file, and of a dark grayish hue on the back with white patches toward the head, and pure white on the underside. Several Mexicans present viewed the capture with great satisfaction, as they affirm this creature is one of the most dreaded enemies of the pearl diver. The capture of a devil fish seems to be an event of rare occurrence. One was caught by the officers of the Narragansett several years ago in this very harbor, but with that exception none of the old salts on board have ever before seen one captured.

Bullets Meeting in the Air.

The probability of bullets and other missiles meeting in their flight when shot from opposite points in such numbers as they would necessarily be in battle, is certainly not by any means doubtful. The possibility of such missiles being welded together by their contact, however, seems so decidedly remote that such a result appears to us certainly phenomenal.

It appears, however, from *Forest and Stream*, that the New York shot manufacturers, Messrs. Tatham Brothers, occasionally found bullets welded together in the scrap-lead brought from the battle-fields of the American civil war, and Lieut.-Col. John A. McLaughlin recently forwarded two bullets to the *Scientific American* so impacted in each other, which were also picked up on the same fields. He says that at the time of the retreat of the Federal Gen. N. P. Banks, after his defeat, in attempting to capture Shreveport, Louisiana, he (Lieut.-Col. Laughlin) was in command of one of the retreating regiments. A portion of his regiment was thrown forward on the flank of the main body in skirmishing order. These two bullets, he says, were impacted in the air between his skirmishers and the skirmishers of the enemy, and fell like a spent ball near the head of the column of the main body. A drum-major, seeing the missile fall near him, picked it up, thinking it to be a spent bullet, but found the two bullets welded together. He afterwards presented it to Lieut.-Col. McLaughlin. One of the bullets belonged to a larger bore rifle than the other, and the larger one is stated to have belonged to the Confederates, as it was of a calibre then known to be much used by them, and somewhat larger in bore than the rifles used by the Northerners. It is supposed that the larger bullet had traveled a shorter distance than the smaller at the instant of impact, and possibly had been propelled by a superior quality or quantity of powder. This, together with its weight, is thought to have had the effect of driving the smaller bullet back beyond the line from which it was fired.

Killed by a Meteor.

On January 15, Mr. Leonidas Grover, who resided near Newtown, Fountain county, Indiana, met his death in a way that is probably without parallel in this, or any other country. Mr. Grover was a widower, living on his farm with a married daughter and her husband. On the evening referred to, the married couple had been absent on a visit to some neighbors, and upon returning at a late hour entered the house, finding everything, to all appearances, in usual order, and supposing that Mr. Grover had already retired, went to bed themselves. Next morning the daughter arose, and having prepared breakfast, went to the adjoining room to call her father, and was horrified to find him lying upon his shattered bed a mutilated corpse. Her screams brought the husband quickly to the bedroom, and an inspection disclosed a ragged opening in the roof, directly over the breast of the unfortunate man, which was torn through as if by a cannon-shot, and extending downward through the bedding and floor; other holes showed the direction taken by the deadly missile. Subsequent research revealed the fact that the awful calamity was caused by the fall of a meteoric stone, and the stone itself pyramidal in shape, and weighing twenty pounds and a few ounces avoirdupois, and stained with blood, was unearthed from a depth of five feet, thus showing the fearful impetus with which it struck the dwelling. The condition of the corpse, with other surroundings, when found, showed that the victim was asleep when stricken, and that death to him was painless.

It is not good for man to be alone, unless he holds both bowers and the ace.—*Rome Sentinel*.

A Mule's Reserved Power.

This mule looked like he was 138 years old, and was dead standing upon his feet. He was hitched to a pine-bodied spring-wagon, with a high dashboard. The "team" was standing on the levee in mute silence, while the old darkey who "driv" it went aboard the wharfboat. A tramp could make a barrel of money selling pictures of that mule, labeled "Patience." His long, flabby ears hung down each side of his head like window-awnings with the rods out of them. His face wore a sober look, while out of his mouth hung a tongue eight inches long. His tail swung down from the rear end of his hurricane roof like a wet rope, while his whole body seemed as death itself. Presently a red-headed urchin, with an old boot in his hand, walked up in front of him, and, looking into his face, saw that the mule was asleep. He walked around, climbed up into that wagon, leaned over the dashboard, lifted that mule's tail, and let it come down in time to catch a death-grip on that boot-leg. That mule woke up so quick that he kicked the boy and the dashboard twenty feet into the air. He didn't stop there. He changed the positions of his ears, hauled in his tongue, planted his fore feet, and his head between his knees, and from the fore shoulders to the tip of his trunk was in lively motion, and he didn't look like he was more than 2 years old, the way he was kicking that old wagon-body in kindling-wood with his heels. He had it all to himself, and was doing fine, when the old darkey rushed up the hill, got in front of him, and grabbing him by each ear, shouted, "Whoa! I tell you. Wat's de matter wid you? Whoa-up?" and, looking around at the crowd, yelled, "Will some o' yer gemmen git dat er boot-leg out wile I hole him? case de waggin's mine, an' I jes borrowed de mule." But no one ventured, and when we left his heels had almost reached the tail-gate, and the old darkey was still yelling "Whoa!"—*Louisville Courier Journal*.

Mormonism.

Expansion is one of the leading tenets of the Mormon Church. "Gather the saints into these valleys of the mountains" is commanded every Sunday from the pulpit of the tabernacle in this city. To increase the members of this church in America is to give its priesthood additional power; for from the numbers of the body of the church is collected one-tenth of their hard earnings to support these priestly parasites. Since the earlier days of the organization of the church, and especially since Brigham Young became its President and leader in Utah, it has had a large fund, known as the "perpetual emigration fund," out of which has been paid, after other sources fail, the expenses of missionaries in foreign countries, and of chartering ships, railroad trains and the like for the purpose of transporting hither both new and old disciples of this peculiar sect. While it cannot be doubted that the motive which actuates most of these emigrants who come here under the auspices of this church is to better their condition by the acquisition of lands and home, yet the dominant incentive to the managers of the church is to increase its members and bring them immediately under their control here for the purpose of increasing their revenues.

These leaders cannot be unaware of the fact that in large numbers of good and true resident members lies the chief power of the Mormon Church on this continent. When there were about 500 of its members in Utah, the rate of tithing was one-tenth of what one of the laity earned or produced annually. Now there are more than 100,000 persons within its membership, a good percentage of whom are subject to the tithing tax, and yet the rate is now, as formerly, one-tenth. There are many persons, in and about this city who pay an annual tithing tax to the Church of more than \$2,000; in other portions of the Territory there are others who pay annually more than \$1,000 tithing. There are few Mormons in Utah who do not, either directly or indirectly, pay something. A majority of the members of this church in Utah pay more than \$10 each, on an average, annually; the remainder pay more than \$5 each, on an average, either directly or indirectly. From the first class of tithe-payers the Church derives annually at least \$250,000; from the second, \$500,000; from the third, \$250,000. Total, \$1,000,000.

The annual increase of the Church for the last ten years can not be put

down at less than 4,000 persons; total, 40,000—3,000 annually by emigrants coming in large companies, 1,000 arriving in small parties. And if nothing prevents the ordinary course of emigration hither, this number will increase annually during the next ten years, till it reaches 10,000 annually. So, with the natural increase of population within the territory, by births, the church fold in Utah and the territories adjacent will embrace more than 300,000 persons before the year 1890. This number of people will form the basis of one or two States and several Territories besides Utah. It is the common experience of every non-Mormon that the members of this church, both men and women, vote as a unit; that the church nominations of candidates for office are manipulated by the leaders, and to vote against their candidates, thus nominated is an offense against the church, punished with ostracism, which is to be damned or tabooed by the whole Mormon community.

The Mormon voting party, led by the priesthood, is compact and well-organized, and against its candidates no member dare vote; or if he does he knows before-hand what the penalty is. It is a social annihilation, and, in too many instances, financial ruin. The consequence is that comparatively few people vote against the church candidates, and the vote is a solid one. Within ten years, under this influence and discipline, the church will have a party well organized, and disciplined, composed of 150,000 voters at least. Here, then, is an army of voters which very many politicians may aspire to command, and be glad to be the recipient of its political favor, and woe to the candidates who oppose such an army at the polls. While, therefore, the coffers of the church are increased with the increase of its members, its political power is increased in the same proportion.—*Salt Lake City Tribune*.

Outlook for Sheep and Wool.

The editor of the wool department of the *Rural World*, writes: The steady decline in the wool market during the past year has been unable to check the interest taken in sheep. A few years ago—after the war—the depression in prices, although not so severe as now, caused a rush out of the business. Hundreds of thousands of sheep were slaughtered for their hide and tallow. Not so now, by any means. To-day the average grades of wool are 22½ per cent. lower than one year ago. Medium grades, or those about half merino blood, are 17 per cent., while fine or full blood merino and Saxony fleeces have declined 25 per cent. Combing wools have fallen off during the year 30 per cent. Still, the interests gains in the flocks over all other productive industries. A Missouri man writes: "My sheep have paid me well, while my cattle have paid me nothing. The attention of capitalists is more and more called to investments in sheep. The cause of all this confidence in the future of sheep has to be the solid foundation of the market. So long as people are born naked, so long will wool be used for clothing. The market is solid, and seems likely to stay so. Until there is more general employment for the masses who buy woolen goods, there is no prospect of better prices for woolen goods or wool. It requires good sheep, with good handling, to make the growing of wool profitable. With these two combined, wool-growing is better, safer and faster than cattle, horses or hogs, on cheap land or on best land. A gentleman in Bureau county, Illinois, on land worth \$80 per acre, and grand improvements, said his twenty-five Cotswold ewes were the best paying stock on his farm. His sheep were nearest the barn, receiving his best care, while the short horns were taking in the stub field, with the thermometer 10 degrees below zero. He claimed, on land worth \$8 per acre, sheep were the very best stock to keep. At no time since the war are men without experience or a knowledge of the business investing so largely in sheep. Not knowing the price of wool, one would suppose the market was still buoyant from the zeal in the business. Among some the fear has existed that the business would be overdone, but how can such be the case while we import nearly as much as we grow. Our population is increasing faster than our wool production is increasing. Suppose our wool crop was to be more than we needed. American enterprise would make our wools excel the world in quality and excellence. Our American skill would make our American manufactured goods most desirable in the world's mar-

kets. Wool-growing then would pay us better than it does now. In the world's markets, with the best wool and best manufactured goods and clothing, we should command the respect due us with our vast ranges for pastoral sheep husbandry, and our immense sheep interests in connection with our mixed husbandry. Besides these, our manufacturing facilities would be found unequalled and unlimited. Our present is secure and sound. Our future is solid and hopeful. Our people are wide awake and see it. Our sheep are the best for our uses, and we know it right well.—*Chicago Times*.

New Proverbial Philosophy.

A short horse is soon curried, but a mule, short or long, will kick you into the next township.

A wise man reflects before he speaks; a fool speaks, and then reflects while his eye is getting well.

When war begins, hell's gates are set open, and it is the same when congress reassembles.

Who hath a cold hath sorrow to his sops, especially if his handkerchief hath starch in it.

Who wants to beat a dog, soon finds a stick, but already has the dog shot around the next corner yelling "ki ki!"

What cannot be cured must be endured, but first try Jones' Magic Liniment.

Trust not a horse's heels nor a dog's tooth, neither a man who says he'll pay you Saturday.

That which is mine is all my own; that which is yours I go halves in. I will also take up a collection.

The wolves eat the poor ass that hath many owners, but not until he gets the rheumatism in his hind legs.

The second meal makes the glutton, the second ill word makes the quarrel, and the second load the pistols with blank cartridges.

The fiddler of the same town never plays well at their feasts, because he is too full to distinguish the "Arkansas Traveler" from the "Dead March in Saul."

The fool never thinks higher than the top of his house, and penneth the festive joke at the expense of the lightning rod agent.

Raise no more spirits than you can conjure down, say at four swallows.

Rather go to bed supperless than rise in debt, now that the bankrupt law has expired.

A spendthrift lets go the bridle, grabs his steed by the mane and yells, "Whoa, Emma!"—*Oil City Derrick*.

Facts for Builders.

One thousand shingles laid four inches to the weather will cover 100 square feet of surface, and five pounds of shingle nails will fasten them on.

One-fifth more siding and flooring is needed than the number of square feet of surface to be covered, because of the lap in the siding and matching of the floor.

One thousand laths will cover seventy yards of surface, and eleven pounds of lath nails will nail them on.

Eight bushels of good lime, sixteen bushels of sand and one bushel of hair will make enough good mortar to plaster 100 square yards.

A cord of stone, three bushels of lime and a cubic yard of sand will lay 100 cubic feet of wall.

Five courses of brick will lay one foot in height on a chimney, six bricks in a course will make a flue four inches wide and twelve inches long, and eight bricks in a course will make a flue eight inches wide and sixteen inches long.

THE *Ithaca Journal* relates that at a greenback caucus in that town the chairman made the remark that "some black sheep are to be found in every flock." The words were no sooner uttered than up jumped a colored man, the only one present, and demanded to know whom the chair was "ludin' at."

THE laborer is worthy of his exchequer.

PRACTICING in a pistol gallery is dear shooting.

NOTHING was made in vein, except human blood.

THE inept's song—"this is the way I long have got,"—*Saturday Night*.

"Set solid," as the printer said when the chair he sat down on wasn't there, and he landed on the floor.—*Cincinnati Times*.

THERE are two kinds of men who tell the truth—one from force of circumstances and the other for a change.—*Elmira Gazette*.

"Do you know what bull-dozing is?" asked a man of an old farmer. "I thought I did," answered the granger, "but the bull wasn't dozing; he was only making believe, and being in the middle of a forty-acre lot, I naturally had to make pretty quick time to reach the fence ahead of him."